

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended): A communications module, configured to be mounted to a handheld communications device and operative to interface with the handheld computing device, the communications module comprising:

a global positioning system that determines the location of the module relative to a standard set of coordinates; and

an L-band transceiver, operative to transmit data directly to a satellite relay, that broadcasts the determined location at a frequency within the L-band of the electromagnetic spectrum and receives location data for at least one other communications module; and

an electrically conductive enclosure that substantially encompasses the L-band transceiver and comprises a conductive back plate configured such that at least a portion of the handheld computing device can be mechanically mounted to the conductive back plate, the electrically conductive enclosure being operative to facilitate the dissipation of heat produced by the L-band transceiver and to shield the L-band transceiver from electromagnetic interference, such that the communications module can be connected to the handheld computing device and removed from the handheld computing device without substantial invasion of the handheld computing device.

2. (Previously Presented): The module of claim 1, further comprising a single antenna operative to transmit and receive signals at L-band frequencies and to transmit and receive signals at GPS frequencies.

3. (Previously Presented): The module of claim 2, the antenna comprising a single quadrifilar helix antenna.

4. (Previously Presented): The module of claim 1, the communications module further comprising an input/output board that translates communications between the communications module and the handheld computing device.

5. (Previously Presented): The module of claim 1, the handheld computing device comprising an internal power supply, the internal power supply being operatively connected to the communications module.

6. (Previously Presented): The module of claim 5, the portable communications device further comprising an external battery that is operatively connected to the internal power supply.

7-16. (Cancelled).

17. (Currently Amended): A method of adapting a personal digital assistant to operate in conjunction with a transceiver module having a predetermined form factor, comprising:

providing at least one logic connection through a data port on the personal digital assistant to provide programmable logic signals to the transceiver;

providing a connection to a battery associated with the personal digital assistant to provide an operating voltage for the transceiver module;

adapting the received programmable logic signals and operating voltage according to the predetermined form factor of the transceiver; and

loading interface software into the transceiver such that the personal digital assistant can drive the transceiver module to periodically transmit location information associated with the transceiver module; and

mechanically mounting at least a portion of the personal digital assistant to a conductive back plate of an electrically conductive enclosure of a communications module such that the communications module can be connected to the handheld computing device and removed from the handheld computing device without substantial invasion of the handheld

computing device, the communications module comprising a global positioning system that determines the location of the module relative to a standard set of coordinates and an L-band transceiver, operative to transmit data directly to a satellite relay, that broadcasts the determined location at a frequency within the L-band of the electromagnetic spectrum and receives location data for at least one other communications module placed inside of the electrically conductive enclosure with the electrically conductive enclosure substantially encompassing the L-band transceiver such that the electrically conductive enclosure is operative to facilitate the dissipation of heat produced by the L-band transceiver and to shield the L-band transceiver from electromagnetic interference.

18. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 17, further comprising the step of connecting an external battery to the battery associated with the personal digital assistant.

19-24. (Cancelled).

25. (Previously Presented): A communications package configured to adapt a handheld computing device for use in a situational awareness system, the communications package comprising:

the communications module of claim 1; and
a computer readable medium storing executable instructions, the executable instructions being configured such that, when loaded onto the handheld computing device, the handheld computing device is adapted to receive the location of the communications module from the global positioning system, receive location data for each of a plurality of other communications modules from the L-band transceiver control, and display the locations of each of the communications module and the plurality of other communications modules on a display associated with the handheld computing device.

26. (Cancelled).

27. (Previously Presented): The communications package of claim 25, the executable instructions being configured to decrypt location data received at the L-band transceiver.
28. (Previously Presented): The communications package of claim 25, the executable instructions being configured to regulate the power usage of each of the L-band transceiver, the global positioning system, and the handheld computing device.
29. (Cancelled).
30. (Currently Amended): The communications module of claim [[29]] 1, the back plate comprising at least one port configured to allow an exchange of data and power between the communications module and the handheld computing device.
31. (Currently Amended): The communications module of claim [[29]] 1, the conductive back plate being configured to replace a back plate of the handheld computing device, and a remainder of the electrically conductive enclosure being separable from the back plate as to allow connection and disconnection of the L-band transceiver and global positioning system from the handheld computing device.